DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 035 681 UD 009 354

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TITLE The Changing Image of the Black American: A Socio-psychological Appraisal.
PUB DATE 69
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., 1969

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Black Power, *Civil Rights, *Negro Attitudes, Negro Stereotypes, Racial Discrimination, Racial Integration, *Self Concept

ABSTRACT

Black culture has always been considered inferior, as the patterns of integration testify: the Black child has been sent to the white school but never vice-versa. The net result of America's history of discrimination has been a negative self-image for the Black person, an image which the "Black is Beautiful" movements are trying to counteract. Positive self and cultural images are necessary for raising expectations and helping Blacks to unite to gain civil rights. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (KG)

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"If a man does not keep pace with his companions,
Perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.
Let him step to the music he hears,
However, measured or far away."

Henry David Thoreau

THE CHANGING IMAGE OF THE BLACK AMERICAN: A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPRAISAL *

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Integration to the Black American has been the fictious carrot on a stick before him. It has meant virtually an unobtainable full social reality. It has meant unilateral rather than bilateral integration; it has meant untiring, self-restrained patience, shattered dreams, faltering and frustrated expectations, dissipated hope, noble courage, and a languishing trust. The white American has adroitly all but strangled the final breath to the Black American's hope for full integration into the social fabric of American life. It is now fourteen years since the famous 1954 Supreme Court decision and the noises I hear coming from the ghetto today are not "Let's find ways to integrate," but more angrily, "We don't want to be integrated, we're tired of begging the white man to accept us."

If integration had moved "...with all deliberate speed" as mandated by the Supreme Court, thereby permitting the Black

*A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., 1969.

UD 009 354

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AMERICAN A FULL AND IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP SELF-ESTEEM AND TO RETAIN HIS BASIC CULTURAL IDENTITY, THE NOW-POWERFUL AND ANTITHETICAL BLACK DIGNITY AND BLACK POWER MOVEMENTS PROBABLY WOULD NOT HAVE ARISEN. BUT THE REPEATED MESSAGE CONSISTENTLY RECEIVED BY THE BLACK AMERICAN WAS THAT, "IN ORDER TO BE INTE-GRATED, YOU MUST BECOME LIKE US--WHITE AND WITH MIDDLE CLASS VALUES." ACCORDINGLY, THE BLACK AMERICAN HAS INTERPRETED INTE-GRATION TO MEAN ULTIMATELY THE DIS-INTEGRATION OR THE DISAPPEAR-ANCE OF HIS RACE AND CULTURE. THE BLACK MOVEMENT TODAY STRENU-OUSLY SEEKS NOT ONLY TO PRESERVE THE BASIC IDENTITY OF THE BLACK AMERICAN, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT SEEKS TO FOSTER THE DEVELOP-MENT OF A DIFFERENT IMAGE, ONE WHICH WILL ERASE THE PREVIOUS NEGATIVE IMAGE ASCRIBED TO HIM. WHILE MEMBERS OF THE TRADITIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS (E.G., THE NAACP AND URBAN LEAGUE) ARE STILL COMMITTED TO WORKING FOR INTEGRATION, MILITANTS CONSIDER INTEGRATION AS IRRELEVANT. THEY SEE THE TASK AS ONE OF UNITING BLACK PEOPLE TO BUILD DECENT BLACK INSTITUTIONS IN BLACK COMMUNITIES.

IN ADDITION, INTEGRATION IN ITS PRESENT FORM IS BEING INTER-PRETED AS JUST ANOTHER EXPRESSION OF WHITE SUPREMACY. SCHOOL INTEGRATION, FOR EXAMPLE, MEANS THAT THE BLACK CHILD GOES TO A SCHOOL WITH WHITE CHILDREN IN WHITE NEIGHBORHOODS OR GOES TO THE WHITE CHILD'S SCHOOL. ONLY, IN BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, SCHOOL SYSTEM UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF DR. NEIL SULLIVAN DO WE HEAR OF TRUE INTEGRATION IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, THAT IS OF WHITE CHILDREN GOING TO BLACK SCHOOLS AND VICE VERSA. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE

INTEGRATION, THEN, THE BLACK AMERICAN TRADITIONALLY HAS HAD TO MODIFY HIS MORES AND FOLKWAYS TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO WHITE AMERICA'S STANDARDS AND NEIGHBORHOODS. INTEGRATION HAS BEEN A ONE-WAY STREET AND UNILATERAL. IT HAS NOT BEEN A TWO-WAY STREET WHICH CALLS FOR AN INTERCHANGE OF CUSTOMS, FOLKWAYS AND MORES. THE BLACK AMERICAN HAS HAD TO MAKE THE CHANGES.

IT WAS ANATOLE FRANCE WHO OBSERVED THAT A WOMAN WHO INSISTS ON EQUALITY RENOUNCES HER SUPERIORITY. IS THERE A LESSON IN THIS OBSERVATION FOR THE BLACK AMERICAN TO TAKE NOTE OF? HAS HE BEEN LISTENING TO THE WRONG DRUMMER? WHY IS THE CRY JUST FOR KEEPING PACE WITH ONE'S COMPANIONS? JAMES BALDWIN HAS APTLY NOTED IN The Fire Next Time, "WHITE PEOPLE CANNOT, IN THE GENERALITY, BE TAKEN AS MODELS OF HOW TO LIVE. RATHER, THE WHITE MAN IS HIMSELF IN SORE NEED OF NEW STANDARDS." IN FACT, THE IDEA THAT MEN ARE CREATED FREE AND EQUAL IS BOTH TRUE AND MISLEADING; MEN ARE BORN DIFFERENT; BUT A PEOPLE LOSE THEIR SOCIAL FREEDOM AND INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY IN SEEKING TO BECOME LIKE ANOTHER GROUP. SO LET THE BLACK AMERICAN STEP TO THE MUSIC HE HEARS, HOWEVER MEASURED OR FAR AWAY.

FURTHERMORE, I CANNOT RECALL MANY SERIOUS ATTEMPTS IN WHICH THE WHITE AMERICAN HAS DELIBERATELY TRIED TO GAIN ACCESS TO BLACK COMMUNITIES, EXCEPT, PERHAPS FOR PURPOSES OF EXPLOITATION. IT HAS MOST FREQUENTLY BEEN THE BLACK AMERICAN TRYING TO GET INTO WHITE SOCIETY. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT MEANS THAT THE BLACK AMERICAN'S PERCEPTION IS THAT WHITE SOCIETY

IS BETTER THAN HIS OWN. IT ALSO PUTS THE WHITE AMERICAN IN THE SUPERIOR POSITION OF DETERMINING WHO SHALL BE ADMITTED INTO HIS COMMUNITIES; IT RELEGATED THE BLACK AMERICAN TO THE INFERIOR POSITION OF ASKING FOR ADMISSION INTO A COMMUNITY. THE WHITE AMERICAN IS THE GATEKEEPER, AND THE BLACK AMERICAN IS THE VISITOR.

THE PROBLEM IS LIKENED TO SITUATIONS ENCOUNTERED IN CHILD-HOOD IN REGARD TO PEER RELATIONSHIPS OF ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION PATTERNS. IF A CHILD IS VIEWED AS ACCEPTABLE IN HIS PEER CULTURE, IT IS BECAUSE HE EXHIBITS CERTAIN BEHAVIORS COMPATIBLE TO THAT PEER GROUP'S WISHES AND EXPECTATIONS. IF THE CHILD DOES NOT EXHIBIT THESE CERTAIN BEHAVIORS, HE IS REJECTED OUTRIGHT AND OFTEN RIDICULED. IT IS ALSO TRUE IN THE INTEGRATION MOVEMENT THAT THE BLACK AMERICAN CANNOT BRING HIS UNIQUE CULTURE TO SUBURBIA WITH HIM. ALAS. HE MUST LEAVE HIS FOLKWAYS. MORES AND CUSTOMS IN THE GHETTO. THE FEELING IS THAT HE MUST BE TRANSFORMED IN ORDER TO BECOME INTEGRATED. OR AS NORMAN MAILER PUTS IT SUCCINCTLY, HE MUST BECOME A WHITE NEGRO.

THUS. WHENEVER A PEOPLE ARE ISOLATED, BY CHOICE OR BY FORCE, TO A LIMITED OR TOTAL EXTENT, THEY DEVELOP THEIR OWN FOLKWAYS, MORES AND CUSTOMS. IN THEOLOGICAL TERMS THERE IS NO THEORETICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NEGRO SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH AND THE WHITE SOUTHERN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH. BUT IN CULTURAL TERMS THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE. THE MERE ADJECTIVE PREFIX "NEGRO" TO ANY NOUN SETS IT ASIDE AS A DIFFERENT BREED FROM THE DOMINANT GROUP. THE ADJECTIVE DOES WHAT IT IS SUPPOSED TO DO, "DESCRIBE AND LIMIT."

THE PREFIX "NEGRO" ESTABLISHES A GREAT DEAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON THE NOUN IT MODIFIES. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, NEGRO ATHLETES ARE NOT REALLY "BETTER" THAN WHITE ATHLETES, JUST AS WHITE AMERICANS ARE NOT SUPERIOR INTELLECTUALLY TO BLACK AMERICANS. IN FACT, CRONBACH STATES THAT "...THERE ARE MORE BRIGHT CHILDREN IN LOWER CLASS FAMILIES BECAUSE THE LOWER CLASS HAS MORE CHILDREN..." BUT THE MYTHICAL IMAGE OF THE BLACK AMERICAN ATHLETE HAS BEEN THAT HE IS SUPERIOR TO WHITE AMERICANS IN A NUMBER OF SPORTS. CONSEQUENTLY, MANY WHITE AMERICANS NEVER SELECT A PARTICULAR SPORT SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE BLACK AMERICAN'S REPUTATION. THE SAME HAS BEEN TRUE FOR THE NEGRO IN INTELLECTUAL AND VOCATIONAL PURSUITS. CERTAIN VOCATIONAL CATEGORIES WERE RESERVED FOR WHITE AMERICANS. BLACK AMERICANS DID NOT APPLY.

IN ORDER TO COUNTERACT THIS PROBLEM OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE BLACK RACE AND THE COMPANION LOSS OF SELF-ESTEEM AN AN OUT-GROWTH OF INTEGRATION, DR. ALFRED POUISSAINT STATES:

> "SINCE THE NEGRO SELF-CONCEPT PROBLEM CANNOT BE SOLVED THROUGH TOKEN INTEGRATION, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT BLACK MEN TURN TO THE DEVELOP-MENT OF THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE AND SUPPLEMENTARY APPROACH FOR THE BUILDING OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN'S SELF-IMAGE AND -ESTEEM. UNFORTUNATELY, THE WHITE MAN CANNOT GIVE NEGROES 'BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS,' NEGRO AMERICANS MUST GIVE IT TO EACH OTHER."

THE BLACK CITIZEN HAS FELT PROUD WHEN HE MOVED INTO AN ALL-WHITE COMMUNITY. HE COULD BE HEARD TO SAY WITH PRIDE. "I AM THE ONLY NEGRO ON THE BLOCK AND THEY ACCEPT ME " ANOTHER FLATTERING COMPLIMENT WHITE AMERICANS HAVE PAID ASSERTIVE BLACK AMERICANS HAS BEEN: "JOHN WAS THE FIRST OF HIS RACE TO BE HIRED BY OUR-COMPANY." TOKEN INTEGRATION OR THE OBVERSE OF THIS, DESEGREGATION, IS NOW MORE HUMILIATING THAN COMPLIMENTARY TO BLACK PEOPLE.

COLORED, NEGRO, BLACK, AFRO-AMERICAN OR WHAT?

THE 1966 EDITION OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE DICTIONARY DEFINES THE FOLLOWING TERMS:

1) COLORED: BELONGING WHOLLY OR IN PART TO SOME OTHER RACE THAN THE WHITE. ESPECIALLY TO THE NEGRO RACE.

2) NEGRO: OF. DENOTING OR PERTAINING TO THE SO-CALLED "BLACK" RACE OF AFRICA AND ITS DESCENDANTS, CHARACTERIZED BY A BROWN-BLACK COMPLEXION AND FLAT NOSE, PROJECTING JAWS, EVERTED LIPS (MEANING TO TURN OUT-WARD OR INSIDE OUT. AS AN INTESTINE) AND COARSE, WOOLLY HAIR.

3) BLACK: PERTAINING TO OR BELONGING TO AN ETHNIC GROUP CHARACTERIZED BY DARK SKIN PIGMENTATION.

4) AFRO-AMERICAN: PERTAINING TO NEGROES IN AMERICA.

The question arises frequently today as to what the Black American should be appropriately called. Not too many years ago the term "colored" was regarded by white Americans as the most courteous and almost apologetic name for Black Americans. It was also the most favorite self-designation used by Black Americans. Its respectability was attested by its use in the title of the largest and oldest civil rights organization, the NAACP. Now, there is some restless clamor about that organization being outdated and updating its name to the National Association for the Advancement of Black People (NAABP).

Conversely, the term "black" during this same period was considered offensive, blatantly insulting, epithetic, and denigrating. Charles Conconi, a reporter of the Washington Evening Star, conducted a small survey recently and showed a radical change in the preferred designations of Negroes. The study showed that although most Black Americans prefer to be called Negro, they demand that the term be correctly pronounced as "KNEE-GROW." The term "black" is now a close second to the term "Negro." It is definately preferred among young black militants who are trying to develop racial pride in the slogan, "Black is Beautiful."

Although you may argue that what this boils down to is just another semantic problem and name calling, most psychiatrists and psychologists would readily agree that the image of the Black American has been substantially marred and filled with

SHAME. THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN, "IF YOU'RE WHITE, YOU'RE ALRIGHT, BUT IF YOU'RE BLACK, GET BACK." AS A RESULT, ESPECIALLY IN BLACK AMERICANS, THIS CONFRONTATION HAS LED TO PAINFUL EMBARRASSMENT AND MUTED, ANGRY SHAME.

From Colored Shame to Black Pride

THE CIVIL RIGHTS GAINS IN THE PAST TWO DECADES HAVE DONE MUCH TO IMPROVE THE NEGATIVE SELF-IMAGE OF THE BLACK AMERICAN. WHEREAS THE CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRESS HAS MOVED AT A SNAIL-LIKE PACE, THE BLACK DIGNITY AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENTS HAVE MOVED WITH DISPATCH. PARTICULARLY THE GROWING OF THE NATURAL OR BUSH HAIR STYLE, THE BLACK-IS-BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT, AND THE ALL-OUT EFFORT TO INSTILL RACIAL PRIDE IN BLACK PEOPLE HAVE DONE MUCH TO NEUTRALIZE AND OFFSET MUCH OF THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF OPPRESSION FROM BEING BLACK. THESE MOVEMENTS ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL IN NATURE AND ATTEMPT TO RE-BUILD A POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE BLACK MAN TO HIMSELF. BUT THE SCARS, IF NOT THE OPEN WOUNDS OF SHAME, ARE STILL THERE.

SHAME IS AN EMOTION THAT HAS NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY STUDIED, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO THE PROBLEMS OF BLACK PEOPLE. SHAME IS A POWERFUL EMOTION THAT IS EXCITED BY AN AWARENESS OF ONE'S ALLEGED SHORTCOMINGS AND IMPROPRIETY OR THAT WHICH BRINGS DISCREDIT TO A PEOPLE. THUS, SHAME IN BLACK PEOPLE PRESUPPOSES THAT THE PERSON FEELS BADLY TOWARD SOMETHING ABOUT HIS BODY (IN THIS CASE THE SELF- OR BODY-IMAGE) ESPECIALLY A PART THAT IS

VISIBLE OR EXPOSED. ONE FEELS SHAME ABOUT THE EXPOSED PART OR PARTS. IN THE BLACK AMERICAN THIS EMBARRASSMENT HAS EMANATED LARGELY FROM EXTERIOR FEATURES AS KINKY HAIR, FLAT NOSE, THICK, EVERTED LIPS AND BLACK SKIN. ERICK ERIKSON IN Childhood and Society STATES THAT "SHAME IS ESSENTIALLY RAGE TURNED AGAINST THE SELF." HE WHO IS ASHAMED WOULD LIKE TO FORCE THE WORLD NOT TO LOOK AT HIM AND NOT TO NOTICE THE EXPOSED EMBARRASSING BODY PARTS. HE WOULD LIKE TO DESTROY THE EYES OF THE WORLD WHICH LOOK AT THE EVERTED LIPS. THE WOOLLY HAIR. THE FLAT NOSE AND THE BLACK SKIN--ALL OF WHICH ARE NEGATIVE SYMBOLS. THE BLACK AMERICAN TO USE RALPH ELLISON'S WORDS. HAS WISHED FOR "INVISIBILITY."

THE FALLACY TO THE SHAMING PROCESS IS THAT SHAMING. PER SE. DOES NOT ALWAYS LEAD TO FEELINGS OF IMPROPRIETY OR FEELINGS OF PASSIVITY OR EVEN POWERLESSNESS. FOR MANY YEARS IT WAS ASSUMED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT FRUSTRATION ALWAYS LED TO AGGRESSION. LATER THIS BELIEF WAS REPUDIATED AND MODIFIED TO STATE THAT AGGRESSION IS BUT ONE OF SEVERAL POSSIBLE REACTIONS TO FRUSTRATION. SIMILARLY, FEELINGS OF IMPROPRIETY ARE BUT ONE OF THE POSSIBLE REACTIONS TO SHAME. SEVERAL OTHER POSSIBLE REACTIONS COULD OCCUR. SHAME MAY LEAD TO A SECRET DETERMINATION TO TRY TO GET AWAY WITH THINGS. DEFIANCE. REBELLION, REACTION FORMATION COMPENSATION, ETC.

IN ADDITION TO THE INVERTED RAGE WHICH FREQUENTLY ACCOMPANIES SHAME. CONSIDER THE CHANCES FOR A BLACK CHILD DEVELOPING A POSITIVE BLACK IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SELF-DEPRECIATING BLACK PARENTS WHO ARE QUITE ANXIOUS ABOUT THEIR OWN BLACK IDENTITY. COUPLED WITH THE REAL EXPERIENCES OF OUTRIGHT REJECTION BY SOME OF WHITE

SOCIETY. FEW BLACK CHILDREN CAN ESCAPE THIS DEVELOPMENT OF A NEGATIVE SELF-IDENTITY OR THE WISH NOW TO BE BLACK. THE NATIONAL IMAGE OR MODEL FOR THE BLACK CHILD HAS BEEN A CHANGING, DISCONTINUOUS PHENOMENON. ELDRIDGE CLEAVER IN HIS BOOK SOUL ON ICE STATES IN REGARD TO THE IMAGE OF THE BLACK AMERICAN:

> "DURING SLAVERY, THE BLACK WAS SEEN AS A MINDLESS SUPERMASCULINE MENIAL. FORCED TO DO THE BACKBREAKING WORK, HE WAS CONCEIVED IN TERMS OF HIS ABILITY TO DO SUCH WORK... THE WHITE MAN ADMINISTERED THE PLANTATION, DOING ALL THE THINKING, EXERCISING OMNIPOTENT POWER OVER THE SLAVES... THE IDEAL WHITE MAN WAS ONE WHO KNEW HOW TO USE HIS HEAD, WHO KNEW HOW TO MANAGE AND CONTROL THINGS AND GET THINGS DONE....THE IDEAL BLACK MAN WAS ONE WHO DID EXACTLY AS HE WAS TOLD, AND DID IT EFFICIENTLY AND CHEERFULLY."

VESTIGES OF THE BLACK AMERICAN MALE MODEL OF A SELF-EFFACING PERSON REMAIN. PART OF TODAY'S BLACK POWER IDEOLOGY AND RHETORIC IS DESIGNED TO ERASE THE "...OBSEQUIOUS WHINE OF A CRINGING SLAVE" IMAGE TO THE BLACK CHILD AND REPLACE IT WITH A NEW IMAGE OF A MAN WITH WELL-DEVELOPED BRAIN AS WELL AS BRAWN.

IT MIGHT WELL BE THAT THE BLACK CHILD HAS HAD TO DERIVE HIS IDENTIFICATIONS FROM A CONTEXT OF WHAT IS NATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE. PETTIGREW IN HIS BOOK ENTITLED PROFILE OF THE NEGRO AMERICAN RELATES A STORY OF A NEGRO CHILD WHO IS IN THERAPY WITH A WHITE THERAPIST. THE THERAPIST ENTERED THE OFFICE ONE DAY AND FOUND

THE CHILD SITTING IN THE THERAPIST'S CHAIR WITH BOTH FEET ON THE DESK. WHEN THE THERAPIST ASKED WHAT THE CHILD WAS DOING, HE REPLIED, "I'M PLAYING WHITE MAN."

AN AMERICAN CHILD, BLACK OR WHITE, HAS NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH HIS MILIEU AS WELL AS WITH VOCATIONS, PHILOSOPHIES AND PERSONALITIES OF REAL OR FICTITIOUS PEOPLE. IN MANY COUNTRIES, INTENSE NATIONALISM ADDS TO THE EASE WITH WHICH A NASCENT AND BUDDING IDENTITY IS FORMED. IN BLACK AMERICAN CULTURE, RELIGION, CLIQUES, GANGS AND SLANG TALK HELP TO STANDARDIZE AND PERPETUATE THE IDENTITY OF THE BLACK CHILD. CERTAIN CRISES AT CRITICAL PHASES IN HIS LIFE, HOWEVER, FORCE HIM TO MAKE CERTAIN DISCRIMINATIONS IN THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS. THE HUGE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS AND THE HOME EXPECTATIONS CREATE UNBELIEVABLE DISCONTINUITIES IN THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS. THE BLACK CHILD HAS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO IDENTIFY WITH VALUES OF THE BROADER AMERICAN SOCIETY OR OF THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH HE LIVES. FREQUENTLY, THE VALUE SYSTEMS ARE AT ODDS. THE SCHOOL OFFERS HISTORICALLY ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF SOCIALLY MEANINGFUL MODELS FOR WORKABLE IDENTIFICATION AGENTS. THE BLACK CHILD'S MILIEU OFFERS A NUMBER OF READY MODELS FOR IDENTIFICATION.

THE EMERGING FEAR AMONG BLACK AMERICANS GENERALLY IS THAT INTEGRATION PER SE WILL LEAD TO SEVERE IDENTITY CRISES FOR THE BLACK CHILD, UNLESS THERE ARE SOME SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURES AND MOVEMENTS TO PREVENT THE TOTAL STRIPPING AWAY OF THE CHILD'S

BASIC CULTURAL IDENTIFICATIONS. THEREFORE, THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS OR BLACK AWARENESS MOVEMENTS ARE CONCEIVED AS A KIND OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AGAINST FURTHER DENIGRATION OF THE BLACK IDENTITY. BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS REFERS TO A SET OF IDEAS, SLOGANS, BELIEFS, AND BEHAVIOR PATTERNS WHICH REAFFIRM THE BEAUTY OF BLACKNESS AND DISPELL ANY NEGATIVE IMAGES BLACK PEOPLE HAVE ABOUT BLACKNESS. BLACKNESS BECOMES A FEELING OF PRIDE RATHER THAN OF SHAME. BLACK NATIONALISM, ON THE OTHER HAND, REFERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEGRO'S OWN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. BLACK NATIONALISM WAS PRECEDED BY IRISH NATIONALISM, JEWISH NATIONALISM, ITALIAN NATIONALISM AND YANKEE NATIONALISM. IT IS NOT A RACIST IDEOLOGY, BUT SIMPLY AN AGGRESSIVE MOVE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE FROM THE DOMINANT GROUP.

BEING BORN IN AN ETHNIC GROUP WHICH HAS A NEGATIVE IMAGE OF ITSELF, AS KINKY HAIR, EVERTED LIPS, FLAT NOSE AND BLACK SKIN, IS LIKE BEING BORN WITH A CONGENITAL BODY DEFECT SUCH AS BLINDNESS OR A PHYSICAL DEFORMITY. MANY BLACK PEOPLE HAVE TRIED IN VAIN TO MODIFY THEIR PHYSICAL AS WELL AS THEIR BODY IMAGE BY ATTEMPTING TO "PROCESS" OR STRAINGTEN THE HAIR, PINCH THE NOSE TO MAKE IT POINTED, TIGHTEN THE LIPS TO MAKE THEM SMALLER AND USE CERTAIN COMMERCIAL COSMETICS ON THE SKIN TO MADE IT A LIGHTER SHADE. THESE ATTEMPTS HAVE OBVIOUSLY NEITHER ALTERED THE GENETIC CONSTITUTION OF THE BLACK AMERICAN, NOR HAVE THEY ACCOMPLISHED THE DESIRED CHANGE IN BODY IMAGE. ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE BODY IMAGE BY USE OF PHYSICAL MEANS HAVE, THEREFORE, BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL,

ESPECIALLY WHEN THESE CHANGES HAVE BEEN SUPERIMPOSED ON AN ALREADY DAMAGED PSYCHOLOGICAL IMAGE. A PSYCHOLOGICAL PURGING HAD TO OCCUR, A "BLACKLASH" TO REMOVE THE NEGATIVE IMAGE.

PART OF THIS PROBLEM IS RELATED TO THE STANDARDS OR NORMS USED IN THE EVALUATION OF A PEOPLE. THE BLACK AMERICAN HAS CONSISTENTLY USED THE WHITE AMERICAN'S STANDARDS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES "GOOD" AND "BAD" HAIR. CURLY, STRAIGHT HAIR HAS BEEN CLASSIFIABLE AS "GOOD" WHEREAS KINKY, WOOLLY HAIR HAS BEEN CLASSIFIED AS "BAD." NO BLACK AMERICAN WAS PROUD OF "BAD" HAIR. THESE DEFINITIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING RE-INTERPRETED BY THE BLACK AMERICAN.

SINCE THE HAIR IS AN INTEGRAL PART AND DETERMINER OF THE BODY IMAGE, JUST AS THE FACE, THE PHYSIQUE AND THE PHYSICAL SIZE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO EXAMINE THIS SINGLE DIMENSION OF BODY IMAGE AS IT RELATES TO SOME OF THE CURRENT MOVEMENTS. THE HAIR IS A HIGHLY VISIBLE PART OF THE BODY AND CONTAINS A GREAT DEAL OF BODY CATHEXIS BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE. A MAN WITH ALOPECIA HAS A NEGATIVE BODY CATHEXIS FOR HAIR. THE BLACK AMERICAN'S HAIR, TOO, HAS ACQUIRED A GOOD DEAL OF NEGATIVE BODY CATHEXIS DUE TO THE VARIOUS STEREOTYPES OF "KINKY-BAD" ASSOCIATIONS, "THICKLIPS-UGLY" CONNOTATIONS AND OTHER DEPRECIATORY APPELLATIONS. SO WHAT HAPPENS TO A BLACK CHILD, WHO, BEFORE THE AGE OF SIX, ACQUIRES A SELF-DEPRECIATING DEFINITION OF VITAL COMPONENTS OF THE BODY IMAGE. IT IS IRONIC THAT THERE NEVER HAVE BEEN GREAT BLACK AQUARIANS IN AMERICA, WHEREAS THERE HAVE BEEN SUPER-STARS

IN BASEBALL, BASKETBALL, FOOTBALL, BOXING, TRACK AND FIELD EVENTS. A SIMPLE EXPLANATION MIGHT WELL BE THAT BLACK CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY FEMALES, HAVE NOT BEEN ENCOURAGED OR PERMITTED BY BLACK PARENTS TO SWIM BECAUSE SWIMMING MUSSES THE HAIR. THE MOTHER WOULD HAVE HAD TO "HOTCOMB" THE HAIR DAILY IF THE LITTLE DAUGHTERS WERE TO GO SWIMMING. THE MOTHERS PROBABLY FEEL A GOOD DEAL OF SHAME ABOUT THE LOOKS OF THE SHORT NAPPY-HAIRED BLACK CHILDREN IN CONTRAST TO THE LONG, FLOWING HAIR OF WHITE CHILDREN. ADD TO THIS THE FACT THAT SWIMMING POOLS HAVE NOT BEEN AVAILABLE TO BLACE CHILDREN.

IT IS ALSO INTERESTING THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO GREAT BLACK TENNIS CHAMPIONS UNTIL JUST RECENTLY IN LT. ARTHUR ASHE, A VIRGINIAN, WHO PROPELLED HIMSELF INTO FAME. THE GENERAL FEELING AMONG BLACKS HAS BEEN THAT TENNIS IS A GAME FOR THE MIDDLE-CLASS AND INTELLECTUALS. THE SAME FEELING HAS BEEN TRUE IN GOLF. THE BLACK AMERICAN HAS SEEN HIMSELF PRIMARILY AS A "CADDY" ON THE GOLF LINKS RATHER THAN AS A SERIOUS CONTENDER.

ONE OF THE POWERFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL MOVEMENTS DESIGNED TO OFF-SET CERTAIN STEREOTYPES, AND TO BUILD A NEW IMAGE AND APPRECIATION OF THE BLACK AMERICAN IS IN HAIR STYLES. THE "BUSH" OR THE "NATURAL" HAIR STYLE IS CURRENTLY IN VOGUE. THE BUSH STYLE FOR BLACK PEOPLE MEANS LETTING THE HAIR GROW NATURALLY. BUT IT MEANS MORE THAN THAT. THE BUSH IS A SYMBOL OF PRIDE. IT IS A SINGLE IMPORTANT COG IN THE WHEEL OF THE BLACK UNITY AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT. THE BUSH IS NOT JUST LONG HAIR AS IT APPEARS TO THE CASUAL OBSERVER; IT IS A SYMBOL OF BLACK IDENTITY. BELONG-

INGNESS, AND TOGETHERNESS. IT IS A METHOD OF UNDOING MANY YEARS OF "BRAINWASHING" OR RATHER "BRAINDIRTYING" ATTITUDES ABOUT THE HAIR. JUST AS FOR THE IRISH, THE COLOR GREEN EVOKES FEELINGS OF LOYALITY AND PATRIOTISM, THE NATURAL OR BUSH IS BECOMING A SIMILAR SYMBOL TO THE BLACK AMERICAN. WHEREAS THE TERMS KINKY, NAPPY, AND WOOLLY HAVE ACQUIRING POSITIVE, ESTEEM-BUILDING VALUES, THEREBY NULLIFYING THE NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS. THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT IS UNIQUELY SHARED BY THE BLACK AMERICAN, AND IT LEADS TO FEELINGS OF BLACK PRIDE RATHER THAN BLACK SHAME.

ANOTHER SPOKE IN THE WHEEL OF BLACK AWARENESS IS THE BLACK-IS-BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT. AS ELLEN HOLLY, A BLACK BROADWAY ACTRESS WROTE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES, "BLACK IS NOT A 'COLOR OF THE SKIN, IT IS A STATE OF MIND...IT IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE SHARED BY NEGRO AMERICANS...". WHEREAS A FEW YEARS AGO BLACK WAS CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE. TODAY IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY MORE FASHIONABLE TO ADDRESS A NEGRO AS BLACK. AT THE 1968 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION IN MIAMI, FLORIDA, A GROUP OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WERE HEARD TO CHANT IN UNISON, "I MAY BE BLACK, BUT I AM SOMEBODY."

IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT A LABEL IS SUPERFICIAL, BUT IT IS ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT LABELS BECOME INVESTED WITH A GOOD DEAL OF AFFECT. THESE LABELS CAN BECOME CONDITIONED STIMULI OF SUFFICIENT INTENSITY TO TRIGGER POWERFUL CONDITIONED REACTIONS IN RESPONDERS. THIS WRITER, THEREFORE, DISAGREES WITH MAYOR WALTER E. WASHINGTON WHO RECENTLY WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "IT'S PERFORMANCE AND QUALIFICATIONS THAT COUNT AND NOT THE COLOR OR RACIAL TAGS." IT HAS

BEEN PRECISELY THESE "RACIAL TAGS" WHICH GUIDED OR MIS-GUIDED THE THINKING AND BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE BLACK AMERICAN. LABELS AND TAGS DO BECOME CONCEPTS AND SHORT-HAND DESCRIPTIONS OF PEOPLE.

NOT ONLY HAVE THERE BEEN CHANGES IN THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE BLACK AMERICAN, BUT INTERNAL CHANGES ARE OCCURRING IN THE SELF-IMAGE AS WELL. THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AFFLUENCE HAS ENGENDERED IN THE BLACK AMERICAN BUDDING EXPECTATIONS AND LOFTY ASPIRATIONS. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE ASPIRATIONAL LEVEL OF THE BLACK AMERICAN, THERE HAS BEEN A CONCOMITANT DETERIORATION IN THE HOPE OF THE BLACK AMERICAN IN THE GHETTO. FIFTY YEARS AGO, THE ASPIRATIONAL LEVEL OF THE BLACK AMERICAN WAS LOW; HIS FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE LEVEL WAS HIGH. TODAY THE SITUATION IS REVERSED; HIS ASPIRATIONAL LEVEL IS HIGH BUT HIS FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE LEVEL IS LOW. THIS REVERSAL IN FRUSTRATION-ASPIRATION RELATION MAKES THE BLACK AMERICAN NOT ONLY AN IMPATIENT MAN BUT AN EXPLOSIVE ONE ALSO.

THIS PAPER BEGAN WITH A QUOTE FROM THE WORKS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, A FAMOUS WHITE AMERICAN. THE QUOTE REFERRED TO THE PACE OF PEOPLE. IT WARNED MAN TO STEP TO THE MUSIC HE HEARS. THIS PAPER WILL END WITH A POEM WRITTEN BY AN ANONYMOUS BLACK AMERICAN. IT, TOO, REFERS TO THE PACE OF THE BLACK AMERICAN. IT IS ENTITLED "SLOW DOWN, BLACK MAN."

SLOW DOWN BLACK MAN

"SLOW DOWN, BLACK MAN YOU TELL ME
YOU'RE MOVING MUCH TOO FAST
WHY, AT THE RATE YOU'RE GOING
YOU SURELY CANNOT LAST

YOU'RE ENTITLED TO YOUR RIGHTS, SON
AND YOU'RE GOING TO GET THEM TOO
BUT YOU'RE RUSHING THINGS TOO FAST
AND THAT AIN'T NO GOOD FOR YOU

SURE, YOUR DEMONSTRATIONS
YOUR PICKETINGS, RIOTS AND SUCH
I KNOW YOU WANT YOUR RIGHTS,
BUT YOU'RE CROWDING THINGS TOO MUCH

SLOW DOWN, BLACK MAN, SLOW DOWN
HEED THE WORDS I SAY
YOU'RE INJURING YOUR CAUSE,
THIS IS NOT THE WAY

THINGS WILL BE ALRIGHT,
YOU HAVEN'T GOT TO WORRY
BUT SLOW DOWN, BLACK MAN, SLOW DOWN
DON'T BE IN SUCH A HURRY."

"I GET THE MESSAGE WHITE MAN
IT'S COMING IN LOUD AND CLEAR
BUT, YOU AIN'T SAYING NOTHING,
IT'S LIKE, MAN I CAN'T HEAR

HOW LONG YOU BEEN A BLACK MAN
HOW LONG YOU BEEN A BOY
WHAT RIGHTS DOES THE NATION HAVE
THAT YOU CANNOT ENJOY

IT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY
NOW, BLACK MAN TAKE IT SLOW
BUT DO YOU KNOW SEGREGATION
HAVE YOU EVER MET THE CROW

YOU DON'T FOOL ME MR. WHITE MAN
YOU AIN'T DEALING FROM THE TOP
YOU DON'T MEAN "SLOW DOWN BLACK MAN"
YOU MAN "DAMMIT NIGGER STOP!"

SLOW DOWN, BLACK MAN YOU TELL ME
MAN YOU GOT YOUR GALL
YOU HAVE NEVER CRIED FOR JUSTICE
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL

HAVE YOU EVER LOST A BROTHER
TO THE FURY OF A MOB
HAS THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN
EVER KEPT YOU FROM GETTING A JOB

SLOW DOWN, BLACK MAN YOU TELL ME
WELL, MR. THAT'S ALRIGHT
IT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY
WHO'S NEVER KNOWN A PLIGHT

I HAVE BEEN GOING SLOW
FOR MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS
AND YET I STILL KNOW
THE SAME OLD HATRED, PREJUDICE AND FEARS

HAVE YOUR BRETHREN BEEN LYNCHED
FOR THE CRIME OF BEING WHITE
HAVE YOU SEEN YOUR MOTHER TREMBLE
WHEN THE KLANSMEN RODE AT NIGHT

I'VE SEEN PATIENT, MR. WHITE MAN
LORD KNOWS I HAVE BEEN
BUT I AIN'T AS GOOD AS JOB
MY PATIENCE HAS AN END

YOU BURN MY HOUSE OF WORSHIP
YOU KILL MY BABIES TOO
SLOW DOWN, BLACK MAN YOU TELL ME
WELL MAN THAT'S UP TO YOU

I'LL SLOW DOWN, MR. WHITE MAN
I PROMISE YOU I WILL
WHEN JIM CROW IS DEAD
AND WE STAND ON FREEDOM HILL